



For More Information

ARCO intends to keep local officials and the public fully informed of its environmental cleanup plans and activities as they move forward. This will include meetings in Rico and the occasional publication of other community bulletins.

In addition, if you have any questions about the voluntary project, please contact ARCO's Project Administrator Cynthia Kezos through the Rico Community Hotline at 1-800-914-4515

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Rico Clean-Up Bulletin #1

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Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) is working closely with property owners, the Town of Rico and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on a voluntary program to stabilize and clean up a number of mining-related sites in the Rico area.

The Rico Clean-Up Bulletin

This is the first in a series of occasional newsletters about the environmental remediation activities being undertaken by ARCO. The Bulletin represents ARCO's commitment to keep Rico residents fully informed as clean-up activities move forward.

The Mining Nature of Rico

Like many communities, Rico's roots trace back to Colorado's historic mining days when nearby areas provided great mineral wealth. A legacy of the area's robust mining history is the local accumulation of mine wastes that contain concentrations of natural occurring metals.

Some of these wastes are found along the waters of Silver Creek and the Dolores River. In other cases, metal-

bearing water is being discharged from old mine tailings.

As the nature of Rico changes with increased tourism and development, there is increased public interest in cleaning up historic mine wastes. Sites in the Rico area which are likely to have concentrations of metals include waste piles, the old "Rico-Argentine" mine tailings site, as well as a limited number of locations within the incorporated boundaries of Rico.

EPA considering "Superfund" Designation

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has begun a process which might result in the designation of certain historic mining areas in and around Rico as "Superfund" sites. This is a legal and regulatory process whereby the federal government oversees and often manages the remediation process.

EPA's "Superfund" designation is commonly a high-profile process involving lengthy and expensive litigation in an attempt to identify and fine firms which generated mine wastes or otherwise had something to do with historic mining activities.

Colorado's Voluntary Program May Result in Faster ...

In 1994 the Colorado Legislature enacted a law which allows parties to voluntarily clean up waste sites and avoid the more prolonged and expensive "Superfund" process.

The voluntary program can be beneficial

for all concerned by resulting in a technically sound, cost-effective cleanup without the stigma of "Superfund" designation. Communities can avoid the high profile, negative image that often comes with

ARCO Pursuing Voluntary Clean-Up in Rico Area

Although ARCO, through its predecessor, Anaconda Minerals Company, had limited, previous involvement in the Rico area, ARCO may be one of several companies that EPA would turn to in order to fund clean-up activities.

Therefore, ARCO has been working with individual property owners, the Town of Rico and State of Colorado officials under the Colorado Voluntary Cleanup and Redevelopment Act to plan and carry out certain remediation projects within the Rico area. To date, ARCO's activities have

included numerous discussions with property owners, state and local officials; soil testing on many residential properties in Rico; and the development of cleanup plans for several mining related sites that are contained in formal applications under Colorado's Voluntary Act.

In all, ARCO has found nothing alarming or unexpected at the identified waste sites and is confident that those sites can be cleaned up under Colorado's voluntary program, in a manner which will benefit the entire Rico area.

Status of ARCO Project

- Remediation plans have been developed for the Argentine tailings site, Silver Swan Mine, Santa Cruz Mine and Columbia tailings area.

- Formal applications for voluntary clean-up have been filed with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on behalf of the owners of the Santa Cruz Mine, Argentine tailings, Silver Swan Mine and Columbia tailings sites. These applications and cleanup plans are being reviewed by state health officials and revised as needed. Copies of the applications are on file with Eric Heil at the Rico Town Hall.

- Last Fall ARCO initiated a field study of soils throughout the Town of Rico and is now studying the analytical data resulting from that effort. While the report will not be available until this Spring, preliminary results do not indicate any impacts that would be of special concern to Rico residents.

- Some work is being planned directly with the property owners at the Atlantic Cable and Van Winkle mine sites, with the intent of preserving them as part of Rico's mining heritage.

- Pending State and owner approvals, actual cleanup work is expected to begin this Summer.

and More Efficient Environmental Cleanup

"Superfund" designation; impacting property values and a town's reputation. Land owners and previous operators can put resources into actual cleanup activities rather than expensive study

and litigation. Colorado's program also allows the EPA to concentrate on sites with more serious problems that are not being voluntarily cleaned up.